Honor
by
Charles Wertinbaker
Saturday Evening Post.Aug.1929
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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

without letting me know."

im again, then she went in-
od for a minute on the porch
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oward our fraternity house,
e left and began walking
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IV

at nine o'clock. I could
adn't been to bed. "We've
honor-committee meeting
said. "Get dressed."
I said.
later. Hurry up. We've
re eleven. Nearly every-
the academic procession."
led the others?" I said.
le. He said he'd be there
The phone didn't answer

resident of the law school.
-committee room, where

Rob said: "I wanted to speak to a girl."

We all thought he had gone crazy. Peter said: "But what was it all about? You'd never have done that unless there had been some big reason for it."

"I just had something to ask her," Rob said.

"Was it vitally important?"

"It wouldn't be of the least interest to anybody but her and me."

Tom Malone was on his feet walking up and down the room. "You've got to tell us something, Rob," he said. "We know damn well you wouldn't deliberately get yourself shipped by the honor committee. Did you realize what you were doing?"

"Of course I did."

I said: "How do you expect us to help you if you won't help us?"

"I don't expect you to help me," Rob said. "I expect you to go through a formality."

"I'm hanged if I vote on this till I hear all about it," Joe said.

"Me, too," said Bill.

If I'd known before what I know now," I said, "I'd never have voted guilty."

"Yes, you would," Rob said. "When you remembered how we'd shipped other men, you would."

The worst of it was that he was right.

"But anyway," he said, "I understand a lot about honor that I never understood before. That's why I don't blame her for trying to make me back down on this."

I remembered something. "By the way," I said, "I've got a letter of yours in my pocket."

Rob hesitated and looked funny; then after a minute he said: "Read it."

I read it aloud:

"*Dearest Rob:* I knew before I went to sleep what you were going to do, and I knew that I was wrong to try to keep you from doing it. I'm afraid I still don't quite understand your code but I do understand how you feel about it. But I can't believe they will expel you. I don't know. I am waiting over to hear. Come to see me as soon as it's over. If they do decide against you I want to tell them what I know. Because I blame myself. If I hadn't left you out there so long, or if I had seen you standing by the

toward the door. Then Bill pulled off gown and put it on Rob, and Joe put cap on his head. I stopped at the edg the lawn and watched them drag him and throw him into his place at the hea the academic department. Then I wai for the procession to start.

Something seemed to be holding it up looked at the president. He was looking me. I waved my arm and he bowed a then started walking again. I watch them go by, a long line of black-gown men, the head of one group capless, t head of one gownless, the head of anoth blind. Then I turned and pushed throu the crowd under the arcade.

Everybody in the crowd was smiling. had been funny, especially the sight of bareheaded student in a linen suit givir orders to the president of the universit As I walked down toward Cabell Hall t watch Rob take his degree I saw a gi standing alone in the shadow of one of th pillars. Her eyes were very bright, but sh was smiling too.

"If you're Mary May," I said, "com along."

PREFERRED LIES

(Continued from Page 13)

d to fight it out on the
ook seven.
holes were weird and
rive on the sixth was
and he tried to slice to
but his ball hit the tree
ngle across the fairway;
opped, yet it ran like a
nd his putt dropped for
le. But on the seventh
s on his drive, in the
his second, third and
to catch a hook on his
on his sixth, into the
rock pile in eight, off
d on the green in ten.
cheerfully, and added:
e I've been in double

The eighth was about three hundred yards, and Duff's drive was in the woods. Bayne and Annis each got home in two. Caster's ball had lodged along some short bushes in the rough. He considered the situation. Duff could never reach the green from the woods where he lay, so Caster elected to call his lie unplayable, and dropped it out on the fairway.

Duff, watching these proceedings, remarked: "You had a chance for a pretty shot out of that stuff, Charlie, if you caught it clean."

"I might have found worse trouble," Caster pointed out. "Thrown away two or three strokes. Safety first for me."

And his ball soared to the green.

Duff went into the woods to hunt his ball. His second hit a tree and rebounded deeper into the tangle there, but his third in some fashion did emerge and found the trap beside the green. When he proceeded to hole out his niblick shot from the trap for a four, Caster uttered an ejaculation of disgust.

"If I had your luck," he declared, "I'd move to Monte Carlo."

Duff grinned. "Guess I was lucky all right," he assented. "Hit 'em the best you can and take 'em as they come. That's the only way I know."

He had a nine on his next; and he and Bayne were four points down at the turn. Bayne announced this fact; and Caster wore a faint satisfaction at the word.

The tenth was a short hole. Annis, to his astonished delight, scored a birdie two. Caster and Bayne took four apiece; but Duff Mace accumulated a cheerful thirteen, playing nine strokes in a patch of thistles beyond the handkerchief green, whither his tee shot had carried.

When he at last holed out, Caster remarked, "That's why I took the penalty in the rough back there. See what I mean?"

"You used your head all right," Duff ungrudgingly agreed.

As they climbed to the eleventh tee Bayne remarked:

"Joe, you and Charlie were each forty-six on that nine. I had a forty-seven."

"What was I?" Duff asked. "About sixty."

"Fifty-nine," said Bayne; and Caster grinned as he drove, and so topped his drive, and barely reached the fairway.

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HONOR

By CHARLES WERTENBAKER

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C.1

IN THE springtime when it got warm at the university we used to sit out on the steps of our fraternity house from right after supper until almost dawn. We would hurry back from our boarding houses in time to watch the sun go out of sight behind the mountain, and the 7:15 train roar down the long straightaway on the other side of the athletic field and disappear in chase of the sun. During those last five or six weeks of the term none of our crowd loafed at the corner after supper and none of us did very much work. Our house had a long, white-pillared porch that was pleasant to sit upon, it was far enough away from the center of things to be almost in the country, and all fifteen of us who lived in it liked one another a good deal. Maybe that's why so few of us were Phi Beta Kappas and why so many of us were lazy.

After the sun had gone down and the train had gone by we would keep on sitting there, watching the colors the sun had left fade out of the sky, and listening to the crickets that were beginning to cut loose in the grass and hedges. Sometimes we would wheel the phonograph through the low French windows and match to see who should play it and sometimes Louis Madison would play the piano. At eight o'clock we would postpone application of the house rule against music, and at 8:30 we would generally do it again. Then at nine o'clock somebody would want to study, and we would have to amuse ourselves by talking.

The rest would drift inside one by one until there was nobody left on the porch but Louis and Rob Coleman and me; we were always the last to leave. The nights are very pretty at the university in the springtime: The air is sweet and the sky is blue, and when there isn't any moon there are lots of stars; the earth has a damp, clean smell; and the crickets and the owls and the trains far away sound as though somebody had taught them how to blend their noises into a melody. At least it seemed that way to us in 1921; none of us wanted ever to have to leave. It may be different now that I am in a place where there isn't any spring, Louis is selling outboard motors in Connecticut, and Rob, who could never see any of it, but could only hear and smell, is a little older and perhaps more wise.

After Louis, who was more conscientious than he was lazy, had persuaded Rob to go in and study a little I would be left out on the porch by myself. At that time I thought I could spend the rest of my life there doing nothing, and so if I didn't feel like it I didn't study, and amused myself by thinking about the crowd that lived in the house and wondering what they wanted and whether they would get it. And the only one I was sure about was Rob.

Rob had been blind all his life. His mother had read to him and taught him the Braille system and how to use a typewriter, and he had picked up the arts of shaving with a straight razor and playing a guitar. I have never known anybody whose blindness was less of a handicap. He played cards, wrote his own letters on a portable, went to the theater—and sometimes, when he was tight enough, to the movies—knew the voice of every person he had ever met, and went anywhere in the university or the town by himself. Of course he knew the place by heart and he knew everybody in it and everybody knew him. The street cars would stop in the middle of the block if Rob whistled, and when he started to cross the street the traffic halted and waited until he reached the other side. His mother had died when he was seventeen, and his brother, who was finishing in law, had brought him to the university. Since then he had never left it. He had been there four years and was getting his B.A. degree this year; after that he was going to take an M.A. and a Ph.D., and then he wanted to teach. Louis, who needed a little extra money, read his books and notes to him, but I read him his private letters.

Without Thinking, Without Caring, He Walked Two Steps Out on the Floor With His Arm Stretched Out Toward Where He Knew the Couple Must Be. His Hand Felt an Arm

When Johnson's wagon came around at eleven o'clock everybody knocked off work for half an hour and ate sandwiches and drank pop. Then the others would begin going to bed, so that by one o'clock Louis and Rob and I were alone on the porch again. Rob would bring out his guitar and play it very softly, so that Doctor Burleigh, who lived across the road, wouldn't get mad, and once in a while we sang a little. Then at two o'clock Louis would go to bed and there wouldn't be anybody left but Rob and me.

Sometimes we would become confidential and tell each other about the things we wanted to do. That nearly always happens when two men who like each other get alone outdoors at night. I did most of the talking then because I didn't know what I wanted to do. Rob had his future all planned. The next year he was going to be an assistant instructor in philosophy; then he would be an instructor while he worked for his Ph.D. After that he would be an assistant professor and some day he might have Little Doc Legendre's chair. He wasn't sure he would get a job on the faculty—it depended on how he made out as instructor, he said—but I never doubted that he would.

Everybody liked Rob. He was president of the academic school, which made him a member of the honor committee, he belonged to every society in the university, and he was as popular with the faculty as he was with the students. Besides, he had plenty of sense, and everybody knew that the university was his only home and the only place he ever wanted to be, and that because of his blindness he couldn't put his roots down in any other place and grow as another man might. So why shouldn't they put him on the faculty and eventually give him Little Doc's chair?

Sometimes we talked about abstract things such as honor. We were very interested in that subject; we both had to make decisions about it from time to time. I was vice president of the academic school and therefore frequently sat on the honor committee, which is made up of the presidents of the five departments and the vice president of the department to which the offender belongs. The faculty has nothing to do with the honor system at the university. Any breach of the code is reported to the committee. If the committee finds the student innocent nothing is ever heard about it; if he is guilty he is told to leave and his name is written in a little book which will be shown to any student who asks to see it. And the code is as rigid as a piece of cold steel.

I used to complain about that to Rob. "It's too hard," I said. "We don't take into account the reasons that might have made a man break the code."

"He either breaks it or he doesn't break it," Rob said. "He cheats or he doesn't cheat; he lies or he doesn't lie. I can't see any excuse for not being a gentleman."

"How about Bill Harper?" I said. Bill was my best argument. "The dances in the gym are pledged, which means that every man who goes on the floor gives his word that he hasn't had a drink since noon. Bill walked out on the floor in a blank. He never knew what he had done until somebody told him the next day. If he was in a blank, his mind wasn't working and he couldn't have given his word to anything. But we expelled him."

"It was hard on Bill, but it was the only thing we could do. Otherwise we could never tell when a man was responsible and when he wasn't. We had to sacrifice Bill to the honor system."

"Well," I said, "the dances ought not to be pledged. Going to a dance tight isn't a breach of honor; it's the pledge that makes it one."

It usually ended that way because Rob would agree with me. But I never could make him admit that there could be any extenuating circumstances in a question of honor. To him a breach of the code was unpardonable; he had no sympathy and no mercy. I think he loved the university so much that he would sacrifice any number of individuals to the one thing that made it different from nearly all other universities. And he kept on doing that to the last.

But sometimes when we sat out there on the porch together we wouldn't talk at all, and Rob would keep on playing his guitar in a wistful sort of way. When he did that I realized that, in spite of the friends he had, Rob was lonesome. I think he was missing the romantic side of life. He had kept away from girls most of his life, chiefly, I think, because he was afraid that in some way they would take advantage of his blindness; and when he talked about them he was so cynical that you could tell he didn't know

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Your family welcomes hot soup with summer's cold meals!

Harping on one string soon tires the ear . . . Contrast and variety are just as necessary to charm the appetite . . . True, your family wants cold foods in summer, but a meal made up of nothing but cold dishes misses the touch of contrast to give life and sparkle . . . Among all your cooling salads, ices and frosty beverages, serve hot, bracing, invigorating soup—and see the difference it makes . . . It quickens the sense of taste . . . All the food seems to take on new zest and flavor . . . Everybody enjoys the meal more . . . And of course, it is more healthful, for the hot soup acts as a splendid tonic to the digestion . . . For this one-hot-dish of the summer meal, millions select Campbell's Vegetable Soup—it's so hearty and delicious . . . Already cooked . . . 12 cents a can.

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Clam Chowder	Tomato
Consommé	Tomato-Okra
Julienne	Vegetable
	Vegetable-Beef

WITH THE MEAL OR AS A MEAL SOUP BELONGS IN THE DAILY DIET

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anything about them. It was a pity, too; Rob was such a big, good-looking fellow, with a nose he would have been conceited about if he could have seen it; and any woman could have married him without having him a burden on her hands, because at the university he did everything everybody else did, and it was hard to realize he was blind at all. But I didn't think there was any chance of his ever getting a girl unless sometime one would have sense enough to take the initiative and convince him that she wasn't going to play tricks with his heart. And that's just what one did.

II

FINALS at the university aren't very important any more; the big dances are during Easter Week. But that year was the year of the centennial celebration, and so everybody stayed over until the last day, and several thousand alumni came back for the party. There had been some talk about taking the pledge off the dances in honor of the centennial, but it was finally decided that it would be too risky with all the alumni there, the old gymnasium hardly big enough for a dance anyway, and the lattice-work decorations making it smaller than usual. And so the pledge stayed on.

But whether the dances were pledged or not didn't mean anything to Rob Coleman because Rob never went to dances. Monday night, the night before he was going to take his degree, he went to a party in Lit Cox's room on the lawn, played his guitar until everybody was feeling good, and then left about eleven o'clock, because he said he hadn't had much sleep lately and wanted to look good when Toby handed him his sheepskin the next day. Nobody offered to walk home with him, because everybody knew that Rob could get home by himself as well as anybody else.

He walked slowly up the lawn, under the arcade, enjoying the echoes of his footsteps down the long passage and the sounds of music and revelry that came from behind the little green doors. When he was up on the lawn he forgot that the university had spread out all around it and pretended that it was just a little college with a row of dormitories on either side of a broad green, as it had been a hundred years ago. He was feeling happy, yet a little sad. After tomorrow he wouldn't be an undergraduate any more, and that was one step toward old age. On the other hand, he was more contented here than he could have been anywhere else in the world; the people were more whole-hearted, and things moved at a nice, leisurely pace. If everything went well he could spend the rest of his life here. And yet he was just a little bit lonesome.

He walked past the rotunda and down the flight of steps to the walk that led down the hill. On the bottom step he stumbled against something soft and fell sprawling on the walk.

A girl's voice said: "Why don't you look where you're going?"

He picked himself up, embarrassed and a little mad. "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't see you all."

"You all?" said the girl. "There's only one of us." She stopped, then an instant later she said: "You're Rob Coleman, aren't you?"

"Right. But I swear I can't remember your voice."

"I never met you," she said, "but I've heard a lot about you since I've been here. Then when I saw——" She stopped again, then said: "I'm sorry about what I said."

"About what?"

"About looking where you were going. I didn't know——"

"That's all right; I'm not sensitive about it." He hesitated, wondering how to leave.

"Why don't you sit down?" she said.

He sat down on the bottom step beside her. "I don't want to be inquisitive," he said, "but what are you doing out here all by yourself?"

"I was hot and tired of dancing, so I asked a nice man if he'd take me out for a breath of air. He said he'd take me up to see the lawn. When we got this far he turned out to be not so nice. So I sent him back."

"Dance gummy?" Rob said.

"It's a good dance, but I'm tired of college dances."

"Been down here a lot?"

"This is the first time. I'd been to nearly every other college, so I thought I'd better take this one in."

"It must be awful to be so blasé."

She didn't answer for a minute, then she said: "Can't I be natural with you?"

"Why not?" Rob said.

"You can't be natural with most college boys. You have to act as though you were in a musical comedy. But I thought maybe I could be natural with you."

"Sure, I'm blind," Rob said. "Go on and be natural."

"I didn't mean that," she said. "Anyway, I'm not blasé. I just don't like dances and things like that enough to keep on enjoying them. They were a lot of fun two years ago."

"You were about eighteen then, weren't you?"

"Nineteen. Since then I've had a coming-out party and been awfully social, but that wasn't so much fun either."

"Maybe you were born to be a great artist or something."

"I'm no good at anything like that. I'm not one of those crazy intellectual women, either, although I have got some sense."

"I believe you have," Rob said.

"I think I'm an ordinary sort of girl who ought to have got married young and spent her life taking care of a man and raising nice, good-looking children. But the trouble is that I'm not bad looking, and daddy has plenty of money, so everybody expects me to be a butterfly, whatever that is."

"I didn't know they had butterflies in Boston."

"How'd you know I came from Boston?"

"You talk like a man I know who comes from Boston. I don't like people who come from Boston."

She remained silent, and Rob had the feeling that she was looking at him. He wished he hadn't been so rude. Finally she said: "I'd better go back to the dance."

"I'll take you," he said.

"Thanks." She stood up. "Only I don't feel like it. The dance won't be over till three-thirty."

"Well," he said, "if you want to see the lawn you don't have to worry about my not being nice."

"You wouldn't mind?"

"I'd love it," he said, and then wondered why he had said that.

Afterward, when Rob told me about that night, he still wasn't quite sure what went on inside of him. Up to that time he had been antagonistic

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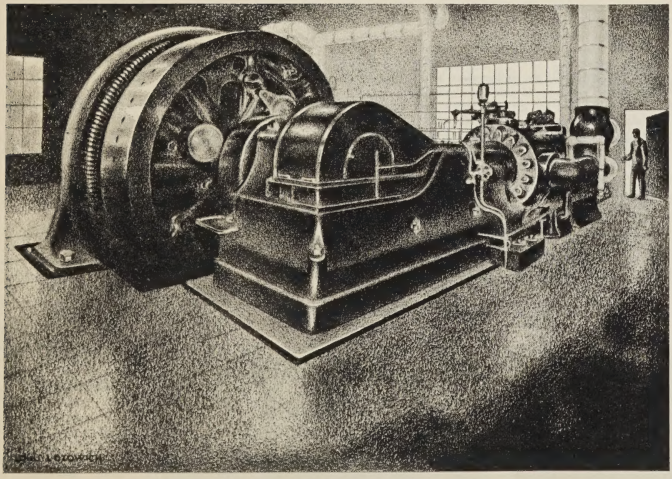
"To Me," She Said, "You're Not Blind. I'll Never Think of You as Being Blind"



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HONOR

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toward her, because she was a woman. But something happened to him when she took his arm and walked along beside him, brushing him with each step. I suppose she supplied what he had been missing; anyway, from then on he forgot to be cautious.

They sat down on the last of the many steps leading down from the rotunda, and after a moment's silence she said: "It's splendid." Then she described it to him, and Rob said that for the first time in his life he really saw it all: The smooth blue grass of the lawn with white columns marching down on each side of it and white columns at the end of it, and a big moon making the white columns blue. Rob said that she seemed to feel that there was something hallowed about it, just as he felt.

"I suppose colleges get this way after so many years," he said. "I suppose the people who live in them and then go away leave something that the place takes on."

Then he found himself telling her about everything he wanted to do and everything he felt.

"And," he told me, "the funny part of it was that she understood it all and thought it was just as wonderful as I did."

And then, of course, he kissed her.

He didn't understand then how it all happened so quickly. Later, when he was telling me about it, he realized that he had been in love when he met her, and all that was needed was a person to objectify his love. And judging from what she had told him at first, she was just about ready to fall in love, too, and Rob was the sort of boy you instinctively trusted and loved. Everybody in the university loved him.

But Rob didn't realize that then. After he had kissed her he didn't say anything for a long while, then he said: "Let's go before it gets worse."

"What do you mean?" she said.

"Let's go before I get so crazy about you I can't get over it."

"You want to get over it?"

"If I don't you'll get over it."

"Why?"

"You'd never want to marry a blind man."

"I'd marry you tomorrow," she said.

"You think so now. The night's gotten you."

"To me," she said, "you're not blind. I'll never think of you as being blind."

Then, instead of getting hurt at his attitude, she went on until she had convinced him. After that they talked about the life they would lead at the university together, and they even went so far as to plan to get married the next year, after Rob had his M.A. and was a full instructor. And all the time, Rob said, he felt as though he were in a dream.

After a while she said: "Have you any idea what time it is?"

He took out his watch and felt the hands. "Two-thirty."

"I've got to go back to the dance. I'm leaving at nine tomorrow morning, and I've got to see Jim and explain a lot of things. Then I'll come out, and we can talk some more."

They hurried down from the lawn and up to the gymnasium.

"Can you take me inside while I look for him?" she said.

"I can't go on the floor; I've had a couple of drinks tonight. But I'll take you to the door."

They were at the foot of the steps. She said: "Never mind. There's a man I know. Wait here. I'll be out in five minutes." Then she was gone.

Rob sat down at the far end of the steps to wait. His head was still going around and he wondered if he would ever wake up. He didn't care much. He grinned as he remembered that he didn't even know her name yet.

He waited fifteen minutes, and then his mind began to take a different turn. Suppose she had been playing with him? And then had become frightened when he took it all so seriously and had run away rather than tell him? Of course he hadn't asked her, but she might have told him her name. All she had said was that she had to see Jim, and there were fifty Jims in the university. He felt himself getting cold all over.

Then he made himself laugh at his imagination. She had probably had trouble finding Jim. He waited fifteen minutes more, not letting himself think. Then he began thinking of how suddenly she had left him. She was leaving at nine o'clock tomorrow morning. She knew that he couldn't follow her on the floor, and she knew that, not knowing her name or even what she looked like, he could never find her again.

Another fifteen minutes went by. When he told me about the things his mind did to him during those fifteen minutes Rob said he didn't expect me to understand how insane he became, but, knowing him as well as I did, I did understand. He had been suspicious of women; then he had thrown suspicion to the winds long enough to fall madly in love; now his suspicion came back ten times as strong because he was in love and therefore incapable of thinking clearly. He felt his watch again. It was twenty-five minutes past three. The dance would be over in five minutes. Without knowing why he did it he got up and walked up the steps and into the gymnasium.

He walked through the vestibule and stopped at the door to the floor. Somewhere in his head was the idea that she might not have seen him where he had been sitting in the shadows and that if he stood there she couldn't miss him; then if she didn't come to him he would know she had tricked him.

The orchestra was playing The Good Old Song. The dance would be over in a minute. Already the stags were leaving to get their hats. He heard people saying "Hi, Rob" to him, but he didn't remember answering any of them. Then he realized that he was in the worst place to be seen. When all the crowd swept out from the floor he would be pushed aside or at least lost in the mob. She might leave without seeing him.

The orchestra started the second verse of the song. Hundreds of voices, of students and alumni, were singing it:

What though the tide of years may roll,
And drift us far apart . . .

A sudden panic came over him. He had to find her and ask her face to face if she had meant to run away from him. He couldn't stand even the little doubt that was left in his mind. Then he heard her voice. He held his breath while he heard it say something casual and unimportant to somebody. He heard feet dancing near him. He heard her voice moving away. Without thinking, without caring, he walked two steps out on the floor with his arm stretched out toward where he knew the couple must be.

His hand felt an arm. Then the voice of a girl who lived at the university said: "Hi, Rob. You're too late. It's just about over and we were dancing out the door." He mumbled something and turned and half ran back through the door. He heard another voice—the voice of the girl he had been seeking—call "Rob!" but he kept on, through the vestibule and out into the open air, conscious only of a vain desire to get away from what he had done.

III

SHE found him where she had left him, at the bottom of the steps. He was standing to one side while the crowd poured past him and his face was turned away from the crowd toward the darkness of the hill. She stopped beside him and said: "I'm sorry I was so long, but Jim was out and didn't come back until just before the dance was over. Then I had to tell him why he couldn't take me home. He was sweet about it all. You weren't worried, were you?"

"No," he said, "I wasn't worried."

She was silent, and he had the feeling again that she was studying him. All the time people were pouring down the steps, all of them laughing, all of them happy. When everybody had gone and the dance was only an echo of laughter left in the air she asked him: "What's the matter, Rob?"

"Nothing," he said. "It's just all off."

"What's all off?"

"Everything."

"Did you change your mind about me while I was gone?"

"No," he said. "I'm crazier about you than I was before." He managed to laugh. "I suppose that's because I can't have you."

"Why can't you have me?"

"I'm leaving here tomorrow," he said. "For good. And anywhere else I'd be just a blind man."

And then he told her what he had done and that it meant that he would be expelled by the honor committee as soon as he reported it.

"But you weren't drunk," she said.

"That doesn't make any difference."

"You didn't dance. I saw you."

"That doesn't matter either. There's a card tacked up on each side of the door saying that by going on the dance floor every student pledges his word that he hasn't had a drink since noon."

"But you couldn't see the cards."

"That's quibbling," he said. "Everybody knows they're there."

"And you'll have to report yourself?"

"Yes."

"I don't see how the honor committee could expel one of its own members."

"That hasn't got anything to do with it."

"But they'd be easier on you, wouldn't they?"

"I wish you'd understand," he said. "The person who commits the offense doesn't matter; it's what he does. Anybody who breaks the honor code is no longer a gentleman and we don't want him here."

"Do you feel that you're not a gentleman?" she asked.

"I don't know. I don't feel that way, but I suppose I'm not one any more."

"Then tell me just why you went on the floor."

It was hard for him to tell her how he had felt about her while he was sitting out on the steps, but he did it. He told her everything he had thought and he tried to explain how he had felt when he ran out there to find her.

When he had finished she put her arms around him, and he could smell the perfume of her hair. "Listen, Rob," she said, "you haven't done anything wrong. Nobody could understand that but you and me, but we know you haven't."

"That helps some," he said.

"I could love you just as much anywhere else," she said, "but you can't leave here. I understand that. Do you think that anybody who loves this place as much as you do could do anything against it?"

He was silent only a minute or two, but during that time he thought about all the things he had wanted and how near he was to having them all.

He tried to think of what he might do if he had to leave the university, but nothing came into his mind. Then he said stubbornly: "I've broken the honor code just the same."

"You've broken the letter of it, not the spirit."

"We have to go by the letter," he said.

"If you had asked a member of the honor committee to suspend the pledge for you for five minutes," she said, "could he have done it?"

"I suppose so." He was letting her argue against him, but what he didn't realize was that in letting her argue against him he was

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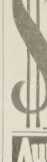

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also letting all his own desires argue against him.

"Then you, as a member of the committee, could have done it for yourself."

"I never thought of that." He had an instant of hope, then he saw that if he abandoned himself to her arguments he was going to lose. But something—it must have been his own subconscious desire for her to convince him—made him keep on arguing against her. He said: "But I didn't."

"You didn't stop and ask yourself the question," she said, "but it was in the back of your mind. If you hadn't satisfied your sense of honor you wouldn't have gone on the floor."

"That sounds like a lawyer's argument."

"I'm just settling the letter of the law. There never was any question about the spirit. You believe that, don't you?"

"I don't know. I suppose so." He was nearly convinced.

"Do you believe that you didn't intend to do anything dishonorable?"

"Yes, I believe that."

"Then that's all that's necessary. And now," she said, "let's forget it all." And, being rather wise, she stopped talking about what had happened and began talking about what was going to happen. In a few minutes Rob had forgotten it—at least he had let it slip into the back part of his mind—and he was talking with her about what they would do. Finally she noticed that it was beginning to get light, and he took her across the road to Mrs. Meade's, where she was staying.

"I'll miss my train tomorrow," she said, "and we can go up together the next day. Then we'll have three weeks at home before you have to come back to summer school."

"Fine," he said.

"And, by the way, my name is Mary May. It's not hard to remember."

"It would be hard to forget," he said.

She kissed him. "You're not going to worry any more about that other thing?"

"I don't know."

"Anyway, promise me you won't do anything about it without letting me know."

"All right."

She kissed him again, then she went inside, and he stood for a minute on the porch in the cold early morning air. Then he walked out of the gate; but instead of turning to the right toward our fraternity house, he turned to the left and began walking toward the lawn.

IV

ROB woke me at nine o'clock. I could see that he hadn't been to bed. "We've got to have an honor-committee meeting right away," he said. "Get dressed."

"What is it?" I said.

"I'll tell you later. Hurry up. We've got to finish before eleven. Nearly everybody has to be in the academic procession."

"Have you called the others?" I said.

"I got Bill Hyde. He said he'd be there in half an hour. The phone didn't answer at the room."

Bill Hyde was president of the law school. I called the honor-committee room, where Joe Davis and Peter Frazier lived. Joe was president of the graduate school, and Peter was president of engineering. Finally I got them, and they said they would get Tom Malone of the medical department and be ready in half an hour. Then I got dressed.

As we left the house a boy came up with a letter. "For you, Mr. Coleman," he said. "A lady at Mrs. Meade's gave it to me and made me promise to give it to you personally. Said it was very important."

Rob took the letter and ran his fingers all around it. Then he gave it to me. "Keep this till after the meeting," he said. "Then maybe I'll want you to read it to me."

He wouldn't tell me anything about what the meeting was for as we walked over to the lawn. And for some reason I didn't then understand, he insisted on taking a long route instead of going by the shortest way, which led past Mrs. Meade's. The others were all there when we arrived.

"Where's the defendant, Rob?" Joe Davis said.

Rob gave us a funny smile. "I'll produce him," he said.

Then we all sat down around the little oak table and everybody was silent. Honor-committee meetings are serious affairs. None of us was over twenty-five, but we all realized that we were the guardians of something that was already more than a hundred years old, and would be there long after we were dead, and was very valuable. That honor code seemed the most important thing in life to us then. And maybe it was. We waited for Rob to speak.

"Gentlemen," Rob said, "this is a very simple case and it ought not to take us more than five minutes to dispose of it. Last night after taking a couple of drinks I went on the dance floor."

For at least three minutes nobody said a word. Finally Bill Hyde said: "Tell us about it, Rob."

"That's all there is to tell," Rob said. Peter Frazier said: "But what did you do it for?"

Rob said: "I wanted to speak to a girl."

We all thought he had gone crazy. Peter said: "But what was it all about? You'd never have done that unless there had been some big reason for it."

"I just had something to ask her," Rob said.

"Was it vitally important?"

"It wouldn't be of the least interest to anybody but her and me."

Tom Malone was on his feet walking up and down the room. "You've got to tell us something, Rob," he said. "We know damn well you wouldn't deliberately get yourself shipped by the honor committee. Did you realize what you were doing?"

"Of course I did."

I said: "How do you expect us to help you if you won't help us?"

"I don't expect you to help me," Rob said. "I expect you to go through a formality."

"I'm hanged if I vote on this till I hear all about it," Joe said.

"Me, too," said Bill.

The rest of us said the same thing.

"In that case," said Rob, "I would be the only one voting and I would vote guilty." He picked up a sheet of paper and tore off six pieces. "You all are members of an honor committee," he said; "not a bunch of schoolboys. You know what you're supposed to do." He pushed five of the pieces of paper down the table.

We all looked at them for a minute, then each took a piece and wrote something on it. Rob had written on his piece.

Bill Hyde collected them and glanced at them. He didn't pause to be dramatic, but said quickly: "They all say guilty."

Rob turned to me. "Will you write the minutes, Don," he said, "and report it to the faculty? You gentlemen understand, of course, that I won't appear to take my degree today."

None of us knew what to do, and now that it was over Rob seemed to have become undecided too. I motioned to the others to leave.

Bill said: "I've got to see somebody at the corner. I'll see you later, Rob—before you leave." But he made a point of shaking hands with Rob; and the others shook hands, too, before they went out. I was left alone with Rob.

"Wait while I write this up," I said, "and I'll walk back to the house with you."

I had the minute book in front of me, but I didn't write a word in it. I waited, and pretty soon Rob was telling me the whole story. At the end of it he said: "After I'd been by myself awhile I knew what to do. So I left her a note telling her to be sure not to miss her train."

"You don't want to see her again?"

"Afterwards I hated her," he said. "I hated her for what she almost made me do." He was silent a minute. "But now I don't. Now that I've done what I ought to have done I love her just as much. But that doesn't make any difference. Everything's over."

"If I'd known before what I know now," I said, "I'd never have voted guilty."

"Yes, you would," Rob said. "When you remembered how we'd shipped other men, you would."

The worst of it was that he was right.

"But anyway," he said, "I understand a lot about honor that I never understood before. That's why I don't blame her for trying to make me back down on this."

I remembered something. "By the way," I said, "I've got a letter of yours in my pocket."

Rob hesitated and looked funny; then after a minute he said: "Read it."

I read it aloud:

"Dearest Rob: I knew before I went to sleep what you were going to do, and I knew that I was wrong to try to keep you from doing it. I'm afraid I still don't quite understand your code but I do understand how you feel about it. But I can't believe they will expel you. I don't know. I am waiting over to hear. Come to see me as soon as it's over. If they do decide against you I want to tell them what I know. Because I blame myself. If I hadn't left you out there so long, or if I had seen you standing by the door. . . . But I was on the other side of the lattice. . . ."

"Lattice?" I said.

"What lattice?" said Rob.

"It was part of the decorations." I was beginning to wake up. I jumped up and ran to the door and opened it. There were dozens of people under the arcade outside. Out in the middle of the lawn, in back of the rotunda, the academic procession had formed, the president at the head of it, the presidents of a score of other universities, there in honor of the centennial, behind him, and behind them the faculty and then the graduates, all in caps and gowns ready to march down to get their degrees. While I was looking the procession started down the lawn.

Rob said: "Go out or come in, but shut the door." He knew what was going on and it hurt him to hear the rustle of those gowns across the lawn.

I tried to speak quietly. "Look here," I said, "the dance floor ended where that lattice started. The doorkeepers were at the gate to that lattice, and the pledge cards were tacked on the gate. You never went on the floor. Wait here."

I slammed the door behind me, pushed through the crowd, and ran across the lawn to where the president was marching at the head of the procession. I ran right in front of him, yelled "Stop a minute," and then ran back to where Bill Hyde was marching at the head of the graduating law class. I pulled him aside, said "Run over to the room quick," and then went after Peter Frazier. By the time I had him, Joe and Tom had seen what I was doing and they followed us. We all pushed into the little room.

"Listen," I said, "he didn't go on the floor. He didn't go inside the lattice. See? It's all off, isn't it?"

All Rob could say was: "But ——"

Two of us grabbed him and pulled him toward the door. Then Bill pulled off his gown and put it on Rob, and Joe put his cap on his head. I stopped at the edge of the lawn and watched them drag him out and throw him into his place at the head of the academic department. Then I waited for the procession to start.

Something seemed to be holding it up. I looked at the president. He was looking at me. I waved my arm and he bowed and then started walking again. I watched them go by, a long line of black-gowned men, the head of one group capless, the head of one gownless, the head of another blind. Then I turned and pushed through the crowd under the arcade.

Everybody in the crowd was smiling. It had been funny, especially the sight of a bareheaded student in a linen suit giving orders to the president of the university. As I walked down toward Cabell Hall to watch Rob take his degree I saw a girl standing alone in the shadow of one of the pillars. Her eyes were very bright, but she was smiling too.

"If you're Mary May," I said, "come along."

PREFERRED LIES

(Continued from Page 13)

first shot, he elected to fight it out on the original line, and took seven.

Duff's next four holes were weird and incredible. His drive on the sixth was stymied by a tree, and he tried to slice to avoid this obstacle, but his ball hit the tree and bounded at an angle across the fairway; his third was half topped, yet it ran like a rabbit to the green, and his putt dropped for a par that won the hole. But on the seventh he was in the woods on his drive, in the plowed ground on his second, third and fourth, in a trap set to catch a hook on his fifth, buried in mud on his sixth, into the ditch in seven, on a rock pile in eight, off the rocks in nine and on the green in ten.

He said "Twelve" cheerfully, and added: "That's the first time I've been in double figures anyway."

The eighth was about three hundred yards, and Duff's drive was in the woods. Bayne and Annis each got home in two. Caster's ball had lodged along some short bushes in the rough. He considered the situation. Duff could never reach the green from the woods where he lay, so Caster elected to call his lie unplayable, and dropped it out on the fairway.

Duff, watching these proceedings, remarked: "You had a chance for a pretty shot out of that stuff, Charlie, if you caught it clean."

"I might have found worse trouble," Caster pointed out. "Thrown away two or three strokes. Safety first for me."

And his ball soared to the green.

Duff went into the woods to hunt his ball. His second hit a tree and rebounded deeper into the tangle there, but his third in some fashion did emerge and found the trap beside the green. When he proceeded to hole out his niblick shot from the trap for a four, Caster uttered an ejaculation of disgust.

"If I had your luck," he declared, "I'd move to Monte Carlo."

Duff grinned. "Guess I was lucky all right," he assented. "Hit 'em the best you can and take 'em as they come. That's the only way I know."

He had a nine on his next; and he and Bayne were four points down at the turn. Bayne announced this fact; and Caster wore a faint satisfaction at the word.

The tenth was a short hole. Annis, to his astonished delight, scored a birdie two. Caster and Bayne took four apiece; but Duff Mace accumulated a cheerful thirteen, playing nine strokes in a patch of thistles beyond the handkerchief green, whither his tee shot had carried.

When he at last holed out, Caster remarked, "That's why I took the penalty in the rough back there. See what I mean?"

"You used your head all right," Duff ungrudgingly agreed.

As they climbed to the eleventh tee Bayne remarked:

"Joe, you and Charlie were each forty-six on that nine. I had a forty-seven."

"What was I?" Duff asked. "About sixty."

"Fifty-nine," said Bayne; and Caster grinned as he drove, and so topped his drive, and barely reached the fairway.

(Continued on Page 93)

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